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2 Clash Over Flag at Trial of '8'

CHICAGO, Oct. 15 (UPI) —A U.S. marshal and a defendant in the trial of the "Chicago eight" fought a tug of war today over a Vietcong flag which appeared spread across the defense table.

The hectic shouting outburst wound up with U.S. District Court Judge Julius J. Hoffman denouncing the attempt to "display a flag of a enemy nation in this courtroom . . . the most outrageous courtroom conduct I have ever seen."

When W.S. Attorney Thomas Foran called Chief Defense Attorney William Knunstler a "mouthpiece," Hoffman refused to reprove Foran. The judge fumed, "I not only will not rule on it, I will ignore it."

After the outbreak, testimony in the trial of the eight antiwar militants, who are charged with conspiring to incite riots during the 1968 Democratic Convention, amounted to an anticlimax.

Today's chief witness was Dennis Oklapec, who worked as an undercover reporter for the then Chicago's America during the convention. He said he infiltrated the demonstrators' ranks and heard Rennie Davis, one of the defendants, outline tactics in the event police forced protesters from their camping grounds in Lincoln Park. "That's easy," he quoted Davis. "We just riot."

The uproar over the Vietcong flag was an outgrowth of the Moratorium day protests against the Vietnam war staged around the country. The seven defendants who are free on bond had hinted they might not show up in court on "M-day." They appeared, but Davis and another defendant, Abbie Hoffman, promptly set a small American flag and a large Vietcong flag on the defense table.

U.S. Marshal Ronald Dobrowski stabbed his finger at the VC flag and ordered, "Get that thing off the table." Abbie Hoffman refused, saying, "We have a right to have it there if we want to." When Dobrowski started to roll up the flag, Abbie Hoffman grabbed the other end and, for a few seconds, the two men tugged away at either side of it.

Dobrowski finally wound up with the flag, but the incident touched off a round of oratory about the significance of M-day.

"Prior to the opening of today's court session, David Dellinger, one of the eight defendants, gave a speech in the courtroom in which he said the defendants would hold a "solumn observance in the courtroom" to show our devotion to the human beings who have been uselessly sacrificed in this war." He then read names of war dead until Judge Hoffman entered and ordered him to sit down.

All eight defendants and their lawyers wore black bands on their arms.